

Throne of Magical Arcana

861 League, the Deputy Presiden

Fernando waved his hands and snorted, “We do, but it’s useless. It falls, so it’s a sheer failure. A failure which will only lead us to the wrong path!”

He obviously wasn’t a big fan of the legendary sorcerer who first built the floating city, as Fernando believed that the sorcerer was just bragging.

A floating city was the shared research object among the three Magic Empires. They tried to put themselves in a city flying in the air and looked down upon ordinary people like gods. However, creating such a city was extremely difficult, especially when it came to how to maintain the floating status. Countless sorcerers had tried.

In the past years, a few legendary sorcerers had claimed that they had successfully built a floating city, but so far, none of them survived. One was involved in the War of Dawn and was shot down by the Church and nobles, while others were quite problematic. The best one floated for more than a decade but finally still crashed.

Douglas had shown his power, so Lauren smiled and said, “We found its wreck. It’s called Allyn, you know, the pretty famous ‘City in the Sky’. But we don’t have the core magic circle structure, so we can’t fix it. It’s just our secret base right now.”

Douglas didn’t care, and he smiled mildly. “We learn things from failures, for they remind us of the mistakes and errors that could’ve been avoided. I’ve always been interested in floating and flying magic and trying to figure the principles out. I hope the Union can give me a chance to take a look.”

“No problem! We’ll talk to the deputy president!” Lauren was very confident.

Lauren knew that the Union only had one archmage who knew Time Stop so far, and so, having an extra powerful archmage meant a lot to the Union. Also, proud as Fernando was, even he respected Douglas’ talent in mathematics, so Lauren also believed that Douglas would become a leader of the Union in the future.

Douglas nodded. “Thanks. So where should we go now?”

“To go to the headquarters, we go to Rentato first.” Lauren had a meaningful smile on his face.

Douglas was surprised. “Rentato? The city where Holm Parish is located?”

“Yes, also the capital of the kingdom.” Lauren nodded and grinned.

.....

The evening glow of the setting sun was as red as blood. A coach arrived in Rentato before the city gate closed.

Driving through the streets smelling like fish, the coach stopped in front of an ordinary-looking hotel.

“Roasted Fish Hotel...” Douglas got off the coach and read the strange name, feeling a bit amused.

Fernando’s voice sounded a bit sharp as he said, “He’s good at making roasted fish and only knows how to roast a fish. I’d recommend you to have one, or he’d be pissed. He’ll say you don’t understand what good food is.”

While speaking, Fernando directly jumped off the coach and stepped in a puddle.

After the rain, there were puddles everywhere in Rentato. But different from a small city, streets in Rentato were paved with rocks, so they still looked quite clean.

Seeing this, Douglas was a bit emotional. “Rentato was an important city across the strait to the empire, and the empire indeed had a good job here, but it’s now taken by the Church...”

He was born in Antiffler, and he believed that he was from Sylvanas Magic Empire.

“We’ll be back one day!” said Fernando in a low but confident voice.

Lauren, who was the coachman, looked back and said, “Don’t just stand here like statues. Go in there first.”

On their way, he found that Douglas was in fact quite easygoing, for he wasn’t as proud as an archmage usually could be. The only thing was that Douglas kept asking questions, but this was not a big deal.

The hotel was rather small and old. Few tables and few guests were in the lobby.

Behind the counter stood a gray-haired man, who was wiping cups attentively.

“You can’t even see your own fingers! Light the candles!” Fernando said to the hotel owner loudly, “Among all your shortcomings, being cheap is the nastiest one!”

It was already evening. The windows of the hotel were rather narrow. Darkness had seized this place.

The hotel owner looked up. He had a square face, and his dull-green left eye looked completely dead and creepy.

“Being cheap is an attitude toward life that you’ll never understand, you are such a little puppy made of Flame Gel,” the hotel owner, whose right eye was in the color of jade-green and looked very mysterious, said in return.

Fernando didn’t care. He turned around and said to Douglas, “Old Green, the owner of the place, an old knight. His left eye is the result of a failure to melt bloodline.”

In this hotel, there was no taboo on talking about magic or bloodline. The few guests in the lobby completely ignored Fernando’s voice and enjoyed their liquor and fish as if nothing happened.

Fernando pointed at Douglas. “You can call him Douglas. He’s a guest from the other side of the strait. He hopes to join us, and he has passed my test. This is the detailed information for League.”

He threw a piece of dark-yellow parchment at Old Green.

Old Green was still wiping the cups and mugs, but the speed at which the piece of parchment flying toward him became lower and lower as if it had fallen into a marsh.

Old Green put down a mug on the parchment on the counter and said without any facial expressions, “Young lad, you want honey-roasted fish? This is the best cuisine in the entire Rentato, Great Holm, and even along the strait! You’ll regret it if you say no!”

He was pretty eager.

Douglas was warned earlier by Fernando, so he smiled and said, “I’d love to.”

“Good, lad. Not many young men know how to appreciate good food now,” said Old Green meaningfully before he walked to the kitchen.

“He’s a knight from an experiment previously conducted by Fernando’s teacher. He has a close relationship with the Hoffenberg family. After the fall of his teacher, Old Green didn’t want to surrender to the Church, so he opened this hotel in Rentato as a secret station for the Union.” Lauren hurriedly came and added the information for Douglas after he pulled the horses into the stable. “Old Green is gonna report the mission to League, our deputy president. They have to discuss it before you enter the headquarters. But don’t worry. There’s no way that they will reject you. You’ll hear the good news tomorrow.”

“Thanks.” Douglas smiled and nodded. “I’m actually not in a hurry. Although I’m very interested in floating and flying, I’m still trying to figure out many things.”

Fernando looked at Douglas with his scarlet eyes and asked hurriedly, “What else are you working on?”

On their way, Fernando had been discussing with Douglas mainly about mathematics. Although he seemed to despise Douglas’ study, he valued Douglas’ talent a lot. Fernando wished to know more about Douglas’ research interest and hear more inspiring and profound insights.

“Something trivial,” said Douglas, who had no intention to keep these as secrets. He pulled out a chair and sat down with Fernando. They started to have a long conversation on various research topics.

The conversation went on for hours. When it was already completely dark outside, Fernando still felt reluctant to leave. They didn’t eat the honey-roasted fish, which made Old Green quite unhappy.

When it was midnight, Fernando finally went back to his room to get some sleep, but his mind was full of questions. Douglas entered his room and saw a few stars among the clouds. He suddenly felt a strange but familiar peace.

He should be able to settle down for a while and concentrate on his studies.

He thought so to himself.

.....

When the sky was barely bright, Douglas heard the familiar footsteps that came from Lauren. Lauren knocked on his door.

“Douglas, the deputy president is here. He’s an archmage.” Lauren was excited about how much Douglas was valued by the Union.

Douglas felt a bit excited as well. “Lauren, please lead me to see the deputy president.”

Lauren led Douglas to the secret chamber on the first floor of the hotel’s basement. Douglas then saw an old man wearing a black, soft hat. He had black hair and blue eyes. The old man’s facial features were sharp, and his nose was slightly hooked. The blue eyes were calm but deep, for lots of secrets were hiding in them.

“Welcome, Douglas,” said League, who was wearing a high-collar coat that was popular in Rentato. He looked like an old and decent noble.

Douglas greeted, “My pleasure, Mr. League.”

Lauren looked around and said, “Fernando’s not here? I’ll go and find him.”

“Don’t bother. I’m here to see Douglas.” League shook his head slowly. “Douglas, you’ve proved yourself by what you did to the Inquisition with Fernando. But your action has brought us huge

trouble. Led by Heart of Time, the clerics, night watchers, and nobles have killed more than thirty sorcerers in the Union.”

“The action was to prove to the nobles our true value! I think the killed sorcerers were spotted by the Church a long time ago, but the Church just didn’t take any actions earlier!” Lauren defended loudly.

League took a gloomy glance at Lauren and cut him off, “This isn’t your business.”

Then he turned back to Douglas. “So, although the Union has granted your application for joining, we have decided to give you some punishment. You’ll be sent to Allyn for three years to study the wreck. If you make no mistakes there, three years later, you’ll become the deputy president of the Union!”

Douglas was a bit amused. The deputy president first suppressed him and then threw some hope at him. But Douglas didn’t care. The most important thing was that he could go and study Allyn, the wreck of the floating city.

“I’m okay with it.” Douglas nodded slightly.

Lauren tried to say something, but he failed. His face flushed a bit.

League finally smiled. “Hope you can figure out how to make it fly again.”

Douglas and Lauren left the basement. On their way back, they saw Fernando walking to them furiously.

Throne of Magical Arcana

862 The Meeting Destined to Happen

Lauren said, somewhat a little silly, “Fernando, you weren’t here, Mr. League...”

Fernando directly ignored him and rushed past Lauren and Douglas like a furious cluster of storms. His red eyes opened big. Obviously, he was outraged.

Douglas slightly frowned but soon unknotted his eyebrows. He watched Fernando rushing downstairs to the secret chamber.

“Fernando!” Lauren finally realized, and he hurriedly yelled, “Don’t argue with Mr. League!”

Bang!

Fernando slammed the door of the secret chamber shut and kept the conversation within.

“What shall we do? Fernando will piss off Mr. League!” Lauren asked Douglas for help. Only Douglas, who carried both good manners and power, could stop this argument right now.

Douglas nodded. "If anything goes wrong, I'll stop it. But expressing himself is Fernando's right."

"But he's challenging the deputy president!" Lauren could not understand Douglas' attitude. In Lauren's eyes, Douglas was very powerful, knowledgeable, and especially talented in mathematics, but Douglas' way of thinking could be quite strange. Douglas was a big fan of asking why, and some of his opinions were quite hard for him to accept. For example, hierarchy, a system which was respected and followed by all sorcerers, seemed to be quite insignificant to Douglas.

Douglas was just smiling but said nothing. At this time, they heard Fernando's roaring from the secret chamber. The door wasn't enough to keep his fury within. And it was louder and louder, which made Lauren start feeling concerned that the walls might collapse at any time.

He listened carefully, trying to figure out what Fernando was saying. At this time, the door of the secret chamber was pushed open fiercely, and League walked out. His face looked rather unhappy as he walked on the stairs.

"I'm the branch president in Paphos County, so I have the right! I don't need you, old man!" Fernando chased League out and yelled.

League stopped walking and turned around. His voice was as cold as ice as he said, "You're no more."

"So what? When I made the decision, I still was!" Fernando looked right into League's eyes angrily.

"Crazy dog..." League murmured and then kept walking.

Fernando waved his arms and yelled, “You old antique! Even if I’m wrong, this has nothing to do with Douglas! He was only obeying my words! He knew nothing from the headquarters!”

Lauren was shocked as he watched them arguing. Although he knew Fernando’s bad temper, it never occurred to him that Fernando would yell at the deputy president! There were only three deputy presidents in the Union, and even the president had to act quite politely to them!

He was about to stop them, but as they kept arguing, Lauren realized Fernando’s intention. He wasn’t arguing with League for himself, as he had already been mentally prepared for the punishment when he proposed; instead, he was arguing for Douglas, for he did not understand why Douglas should be responsible for this.

At this time, League walked past Douglas. He caught his breath and then said, “Douglas, I forgot to tell you. As a ninth-circle archmage, you’re qualified to attend the core meeting that is to be held five days later. So you won’t be heading for Allyn until next week.”

“Sure,” Douglas said. He did not ask anything else and just nodded politely.

“You old thing! If you have guts, you just kick Douglas out right now! Tons of organizations want to have an archmage!” Fernando wouldn’t stop.

Those legendary sorcerers were busy protecting themselves, so a ninth-circle archmage should be considered as a top force for every organization, except for Cabin of Palmeira, which was a legendary group. So far, the entire Union of Sorcerers only had two ninth circles. One of them was the president, Arnold, and the other was League. The two deputy presidents were only senior-ranks working on hitting the eighth circle.

League snorted, unwilling to argue with Fernando. He hurriedly walked past Lauren and headed for Old Green's room.

"You old man! You're still thinking about your power and resources when facing such great danger! I joined the Union because of the concept you promoted—to push aside suspicion and bias and accept all groups and sorcerers! Shame on you! A senior-rank sorcerer can go anywhere!" Fernando roared at League's back.

Lauren had cold sweat on his back. He wondered if Fernando had ever worried about a possible vengeance on himself in the future if he kept acting like this.

He would pretend that he never heard such words from Fernando!

League paused a bit, and then he accelerated his pace and disappeared around the corner.

"Fernando, how could you talk like that?" Lauren was rather anxious. "He can just give you a seemingly simple but actually dangerous mission!"

"Unless he can kill me with one strike, or I'll let him know how dangerous a storm can be!" Fernando snorted, "Also, he doesn't get along that well with the president."

Lauren was shocked. He didn't expect that there was a reason behind his friend's angry roaring. Then was the roaring real? Or he was just pretending?

"No wonder you're not afraid of Mr. League..." Lauren murmured.

Fernando paused a bit and said, “This has nothing to do with fear. If it had been the president standing in front of me, I’d have done the same!”

Alright, he was still that Fernando Lauren knew. Lauren felt a bit relaxed, but also a bit sad.

Fernando took a deep breath and combed his hair with his hand. “In such an era, we might die anytime because of the black-clawed dogs or clerics. So we mustn’t be afraid of death, as death is our destiny and doomed ending. And if we are not afraid of death, why should we be afraid of a president or deputy president?”

Douglas had been listening to their conversation quietly. At this time, he smiled and said, “Thanks.”

“I just don’t like how they treat people unfairly!” Fernando looked up at the mottled ceiling.

.....

In the next three days, while Lauren was busy with the tasks allocated to him as a liaison, Douglas and Fernando stayed idle.

Douglas and Fernando, however, didn’t mind it. They even enjoyed themselves in the three days that they kept talking and exchanging ideas. And they both agreed that the current magic system did have its fatal problems, which were impossible to be fixed.

Although Fernando spent most of the time listening to and learning from Douglas, his talent in mathematics and magic made his comments rather inspiring to Douglas. Therefore, Douglas was not only teaching Fernando. Together, they had a pretty good time.

Even though it was almost evening, they were still working on a math problem. It was already very dim in the hotel lobby. However, both of them had cast a spell on their eyes so that they could see through complete darkness. They had a honey roasted fish beside them, but the fish was not their focus at all.

A middle-rank sorcerer stayed beside them to listen to their conversation out of curiosity, but the sorcerer soon walked away, feeling rather dizzy.

At this time, the half-closed gate of the hotel was pushed open, and the cool evening breeze had instantly driven away the humid and warm air in the lobby.

“Green, two roasted fish!” The hoarse and deep voice came in first before the person showed himself.

Coming back after finishing his mission, Lauren just sat down. He believed that Fernando now finally had a competitor in terms of roaring.

Douglas and Fernando looked up at the same time because they had sensed that the man was a knight. Was he Green’s friend?

Because of Green, many knights liked coming here, which made the sorcerers here feel quite insecure, but this had also effectively helped them hide from the Church’s search. Also, Green

would pick his guests. If a knight was rather hostile to sorcerers or sensitive to topics related to magic, he would find an excuse to get angry and kick the knight out of the hotel forever. If there was a knight in the hotel, Old Green would put a secret sign outside of the hotel so that the sorcerers coming in could be prepared. When Fernando and Douglas arrived, there was no knight in the hotel.

No one would ever expect that a gathering place for knights was in fact a secret liaison station for sorcerers!

Bang!

Hearing the voice, the wood mug that Green was wiping fell from his hands onto the counter.

He stared at the entrance, and his dead green eye released circles of waves that could affect the physical surroundings!

“What brings you here?” asked Old Green.

Meanwhile, he took a warning glance at Douglas and Fernando. They understood immediately and hid their draft paper sheets.

“You want neither title nor treasure. All you want is such a hotel selling honey-roasted fish? Are you going to give up your title as a knight, Fatal Left Eye?” A tall and strong man, who was wearing a tight gray knight suit, walked in. His eyebrows were thick, and his nose was rather high. He looked quite young, but if one took a closer look, the fine wrinkles would be spotted. Only his blue eyes were full of energy, like a teenage boy’s cheerful eyes.

Following him was a young girl, about eleven or twelve years old. She had a pretty face but pretended to be rather serious.

She had a tidy fringe of hair on her forehead, which made her look like a delicate doll. The heavy sword she was carrying was even taller than herself. Right now, she was struggling with dragging the sword with her.

Her eyes were also very impressive. She had silver-gray eyes, and they were cold and sharp.

“So, she is?” asked Old Green confusedly.

The man whose blue eyes looked rather young smiled. “I’m her teacher now, training her to be a knight.”

The little girl squared her shoulder a bit. But her right foot tripped over her left foot, and she then had a bad fall.

“Haha, she can’t even walk. How can she be a squire?” Fernando grinned and commented.

The girl was still dragging the heavy sword. On the ground, she looked up, and her nice-looking eyebrows furrowed angrily. “No one knows how to walk before they learn it!”

Umm? Fernando didn’t get it immediately.

“So she is the descendant of ...” The look on Old Green’s face had become quite strange. It looked both serious and funny.

The man with beautiful eyes smiled. “Yes, I didn’t expect this at all.”

He then turned and said to the young girl, “Alright, slowly get up, Hathaway. You’ll become strong one day.”

Chapter 863 - Everyone Has Something They Are Confident In

863 Everyone Has Something They Are Confident In

“Yes!” The little girl named Hathaway wriggled and tried to get back on her feet, but she still did not let go of the giant sword in her hands, as if it were the most important thing for her today. Therefore, it was impossible for her to stand up with only her elbows. After she finally lifted herself from the ground, she fell down again.

Again and again, Hathaway failed to get up, and her knight teacher simply watched without saying anything, as if he were telling her that she could count on nobody else except for herself to become a knight. Gradually, Hathaway’s cold but beautiful eyes seemed to be covered in mist, but she bit her red lips and furrowed her eyebrows hard, not letting out any sound of pain or distress.

Even Old Green found it unbearable to keep watching. He said in a coarse voice, “Sharp...”

Hardly had he called the man when Douglas, who had been observing quietly, opened his mouth and said gently, "Sometimes, you drop things temporarily to better hold them in the future. Do not impose too much pressure on yourself."

Hathaway raised her head and stared at Douglas with her misty gray eyes, as if she were considering what he meant.

Fernando chuckled. "If you cling to your giant sword, of course you can never get back on your feet. I've never seen any kid as silly as you!"

"This is a mission!" Hathaway spewed out her words one after another. She was too angry and did not know how to speak logically yet.

Fernando said, not in a good mood, "Throw the sword on the ground and pick it up again after you stand up. Otherwise, with your body coordination, it's impossible for you to get back on your feet!"

He had seen Hathaway's real problem but pointed it out in the bluntest way. In the meantime, he added to himself, "Your language ability also needs improvement!"

Hathaway's face turned dim and grim again. Nothing could be seen except indifference and stubbornness. Also, she did not follow the subtle suggestion behind Fernando's mockery but kept on trying. She supported herself and fell again and again. Finally, after countless failures, she sat up on her knees and raised the giant sword, slowly rising to her feet while relying on it.

Looking at that scene, Old Green seemed excited. "Besides the color of his eyes, she has the determination in his blood!"

“Yes. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have accepted the mission, even though it was given by that big shot in person.” Her knight teacher who was called Sharp smiled in consolation and mixed feelings. His blue eyes were as peaceful as a windless ocean.

Hathaway’s little face had been contaminated by the dirt, and her hair turned messy. Holding the giant sword, she turned her head and looked at Fernando. She did not say anything or make a snort, but her indifferent eyes alone were enough to darken Fernando’s face. He mumbled, “There’s a chance to succeed by trying repetitively when it comes to such little things. If it were anything else, such an idiotic approach would’ve caused a person to be killed in the first few attempts. It’s impossible to start all over again.”

Her face unchanged, Hathaway turned to Douglas and bowed in respect. “Thank you.”

Her voice was both gentle and chilly.

“Determination is a great quality.” Douglas praised her before he continued, “However, you need to learn to recognize your mistakes. Persistence does not mean that you have to persist in mistakes. You should always think and handle problems based on facts.”

Hathaway nodded her head, half confused. She stumbled to her teacher with the giant sword.

Sharp smiled and said to Old Green, “I’m surprised to see such a philosopher in your place. I’ve only heard similar things from the cardinal theologians. However, he said the opposite, claiming that persistence means persisting in the truth, and that the truth is the Lord’s teaching.”

In the past, due to the long lives of many intelligent creatures, they had the spare time to consider the metaphysical questions, and that was how philosophy was born. Then, many common scholars joined them, not giving up thinking just because their life spans were short. They were known as

philosophers or thinkers. However, as the War of Dawn went on and the Church dominated the world, the philosophers that they disliked were going extinct.

“As a matter of fact, everyone thinks as long as he lives. That is, if he is not an inferior creature,” Fernando interrupted again with his mean mouth.

Sharp turned around and looked at him; the smile on his face was suddenly gone. The atmosphere in the lobby of the small hotel was suddenly frozen, and the sound of seawater surging vaguely came out. Hathaway’s face suddenly softened, as if she were looking forward to what might happen next.

“Cough.” Old Green coughed and broke the silence. “Sharp, don’t be petty with kids. He’s always like this. It’s nothing personal.”

Although Fernando could not reveal his vibe as a senior-rank sorcerer, he still glared back at Sharp impolitely without backing off.

“Hahaha, hahaha.” Sharp suddenly burst into laughter. “Interesting. He’s very like me when I was young. I used to despise and mock other people; pigheaded and unlikable.”

Fernando sniffed and turned around, ignoring the guy. He did not sense anything similar between them.

Sharp sat on a high chair before the wood counter, and Old Green poured him a glass of hard liquor without him saying anything.

“Hu! Only you still have this recipe! It’s been a long time since I tasted such hard liquor!” Sharp drank and chuckled. “I became civilized after I was almost beaten to death by him several times.”

It seemed that he was really of a mind to teach Fernando a lesson just now.

Fernando sniffed but was not mean again, because he knew very well that it was best not to expose his magic capabilities in Rentato unless he had absolute confidence. Otherwise, both himself and his partner might be killed!

Sharp finished the glass of liquor and turned to the little girl, Hathaway. “You can find a seat and wait for your roasted fish with honey. Well, you may put down the giant sword now.”

Hathaway nodded and put the sword on the table. Then, she pulled a chair as deftly as a deer and sat down, before she took out a blue-covered book from her magic pouch.

Turning the pages, she began to read carefully. The indifference on her face was gradually gone, and she curled her lips and frowned now and then.

It enlivened her and made her more like a regular quiet kid of her age instead of a unique one a moment ago.

“Chronicles of Antiffler?” With a pair of sharp eyes, Fernando couldn’t help but read the title of Hathaway’s book. “You’ll get dumber and dumber if you read such kind of books at such a young age.”

Hathaway raised her head and looked at him. Then, without saying anything, she was buried in the book again.

Douglas was amused by that, finding it impossible to understand Fernando's behavior.

Lauren chuckled and sat next to Douglas. He said in a low voice, "Do you feel that it is unlike Fernando? Actually, he has always been like this. He's mean and sarcastic and impatient when it comes to important issues, but he also likes playing with kids and making inappropriate jokes with other people. You'll understand it better after you get to know him."

He completely ignored Fernando's glare.

"It means that he has a young state of mind." Douglas chuckled. "However, I think kids are better to be encouraged..."

Lauren went on to say with a low voice, "Fernando used to have a sister who 'accidentally' died at twelve. So, he has always been fond of little kids, although he never admits it and would rather tease them..."

Pa.

Fernando patted the table hard and interrupted Lauren's betrayal.

"Hehe." Sharp seemed to have perfect hearing although he was drinking nonstop. He chuckled in time, suggesting that he heard everything.

Hathaway turned the pages much more slowly, as if she heard Lauren's words too. Her tightened face was greatly relaxed.

Lauren smiled in satisfaction. It was exactly what he hoped. He hoped that the two parties wouldn't burst into a fight, and their identities as sorcerers would not be exposed.

Fernando stared at Lauren without blinking, as if he were considering how to deal with the guy tonight.

After reading *Chronicles of Antiffler* for a while, Hathaway put it back and took out another thick book with a black power, several sheaves of paper, a quill, and a delicate bottle of ink.

Opening the book, Hathaway wrote and drew attentively, emanating the most eye-catching glow of confidence, which was exactly what she lacked most previously!

"Basics of Mathematics..." Fernando saw the title on it.

He was not surprised. Mathematics was the only magic-related knowledge that the Church allowed to learn in public. It was because some nobles wanted to make sure that they were not deceived by their accountants. But of course, most nobles were still proud of their inability to calculate.

Douglas could also see clearly in the dimness. He smiled. "As a matter of fact, there are simpler ways."

He was too delighted to control himself.

“Really?” Hathaway pursued bluntly, as if she found it hard to believe.

Now that he already said it, Douglas did not back off. He walked to her and sat down. Picking up the quill, he offered her another solution that was creative and convenient.

Hathaway stared at the paper before her in a daze. After a dozen seconds, her indifferent silver eyes were revitalized, and she nodded affirmatively. “It’s real.”

As she spoke, she repeated the method and considered it for a while. Then, she quickly turned the book to a certain page and pushed the book to Douglas. Her face was still nonchalant, but she said with expectations in her eyes, “What about this one?”

Douglas read it. Before he said anything, Fernando, who had approached at some point, already mocked, “You don’t know how to solve such a simple question?”

He introduced the solution quickly.

Hathaway furrowed her beautiful eyebrows first, but after her calculation, her eyebrows gradually relaxed. Then, she quickly turned the book to another page. Without saying anything, she simply looked at Douglas and Fernando.

Throne of Magical Arcana

864 A “Difficult” Mission

Although the mathematical knowledge that Hathaway was learning was already sophisticated enough for children of her age, it was not really tricky for either Douglas or Fernando. So, Hathaway turned the pages and pointed at the questions on it with her narrow finger without saying a word, waiting for the standard, simple answers. She was not disappointed once.

Sharp, her knight teacher who was enjoying the roasted fish with honey and the hard liquor, was gradually attracted by the situation on this side. He forgot to chat with Old Green anymore. Frowning, he observed Douglas and Fernando carefully.

Perhaps because of her excitement, Hathaway’s face was redder than before. After a long time, she finally closed her books and said in a low voice, “Thank you.”

Fernando was about to mock her when Sharp suddenly put down his glass and stood up from the high chair. He chuckled. “Old Green, I did not know that your guest was not only a philosopher but also a mathematician. I think he is even more knowledgeable than the court teachers...”

His words were directed at Old Green, but his blue eyes were focused on Douglas and Fernando.

Old Green picked up Sharp’s glass and washed it in the sink while he mumbled, “What’s wrong with that? Most guys who are good at mathematics are philosophers to some extent.”

“Yes. Mathematics is the ultimate representation of philosophy.” Douglas agreed with Old Green.

Fernando, on the other hand, sniffed and turned his head, showing that he was unwilling to talk to the barbarian.

Sharp chuckled. Instead of staring at Douglas and Fernando, he strolled to Hathaway and watched her eat the roasted fish, which was getting cold. "Hathaway, how does the roast fish taste?"

"Not bad." Hathaway was taciturn even though he was her knight teacher.

"We need to leave after you taste it. You have to have dinner at home. I cannot let them know that I allow you to eat random food," Sharp said with a smile.

Hathaway took off the handkerchief on the left side of her knight suit and wiped her lips gently. Then, she nodded her head. "Alright."

"Hold your sword well and never drop it easily, but remember not to let it affect you. The life of a knight lies in their creed, their spirit, and their will, not in their sword." Sharp finally taught Hathaway something about what happened earlier.

Holding the enormous sword that was even taller than herself, Hathaway frowned, as if she still did not agree with the theory. However, instead of arguing, she simply followed Sharp out of the hotel thoughtfully.

The moment she got out of the door, she suddenly turned around. Her face was still expressionless, but her silver eyes seemed gentler than before. Then, she nodded at Douglas and Fernando, as if she was thanking them for their mathematical guidance again.

After they were far away, Fernando said, “Silver pupils and cold eyes. She must be a descendant of the Hoffenberg family, isn’t she? What’s her relationship with the Sword of Truth?”

He looked at Old Green, waiting for his answer.

The Sword of Truth was the title for Williamson Hoffenberg, who was a legend even more powerful than “Heart of Time” Kritonia, and a knight who rose against the tyranny of the Magic Empire earliest with the Saint Truth. Therefore, the God of Truth had blessed him with a legendary longsword that matched his blood power. It was known as the “Sword of Truth”.

“You don’t need to know,” Old Green replied without raising his eyes.

Fernando sniffed. “It’s very easy to investigate. Not everybody thinks that it is a secret like you do.”

Old Green turned a deaf ear to his mockery and focused on wiping the glass.

...

The next morning, Fernando knocked on Douglas’ door. He had new ideas about a certain magic problem after he woke up and came to talk with Douglas in excitement.

“I admit that there were some minor mistakes in my opinion yesterday...” The moment the door was opened, Fernando said sincerely, but he saw somebody else other than Douglas in the room. “Deputy, why are you here?”

Seated in the chair before the desk was Deputy President League, who had been pissed off by him and stormed off a few days ago!

“Am I not allowed to be here?” League touched his hawk nose and asked gloomily.

Fernando chuckled. He was about to mock League’s thick face when Douglas said, “League is here to give me a mission.”

“A mission? What mission requires a ninth-circle archmage? Study Allyn?” Fernando looked serious.

Douglas said peacefully, “I’m asked to become Hathaway’s mathematics teacher in private and measure her magic gifts. If possible, I will direct her to embark on the path of magic.”

“Is her place high in the Hoffenberg family?” Fernando knew the Union’s strategy to attract nobles.

“Her father was Ludwig, the youngest and most loved child of the Sword of Truth, as well as the knight who was likely to become the second legend of the Hoffenberg family. It’s a pity that he died by accident in a certain relic. So, the Sword of Truth has shifted his love to Ludwig’s only daughter, Hathaway. He loves her so much that he doesn’t care that she lacks knight talents at all.” League introduced the situation roughly. After all, Fernando was involved in the “lesson” yesterday too.

Fernando sniffed. “Why didn’t you ask me to do that? I think I’ll be a great teacher.”

He was just saying it. He never really thought of teaching any student right now.

“You? Hehe,” League replied without a smile.

Douglas also shook his head faintly. He did not think that the impatient and mean Fernando could be a good teacher.

Fernando snorted. Dissatisfied with their attitudes, he said, “Sharp may be the gold knight. If he recognizes us, the whole Union may be destroyed. Also, the Sword of Truth is a devout believer. I doubt that he will support us even if Hathaway walks on the path of magic.”

“A devout believer is always contradictory to a qualified king. It appears to me that the Sword of Truth is more and more like the latter,” League said thoughtfully and walked out of the door.

After a brief stun, Fernando said after the guy left, “He’s not as stupid as I thought...”

...

The best breakfast of the “Roasted Fish Hotel” was a piece of white bread, a cluster of butter, and a roasted fish. Fernando complained that the menu never changed, but he still devoured the food in the meantime. He always had a great appetite.

After swallowing some of the food, Fernando finally had the energy to ask, “How do you plan to become Hathaway’s private mathematics teacher? Since she is so important, I don’t believe that Sharp, the ‘Blue Demon’, will allow her to spend time with a stranger and walk on the path of magic.”

He had already figured out Sharp’s identity. The man was “Blue Grace”, a level-nine gold knight and the deputy captain of the Sword of Truth’s Knights. However, he was known as “Blue Demon” among the sorcerers for killing too many of them.

“I need to meet Hathaway first.” Douglas smiled after he swallowed the food gracefully. “I don’t know the routine of Sharp and her yet, so I cannot make any plan.”

Fernando poured ale into his mouth. “You are not as reckless as I thought.”

At this moment, the half-closed hotel door was knocked on, and Hathaway, dressed like a little princess, walked in with a blue-covered book. Behind her, Sharp followed with a vague smile.

Hathaway ran to Douglas and Fernando’s “table” quickly.

“Same hand and foot...” Fernando was as mean as before.

Hathaway subconsciously slowed down. She reached them, put the book on the table, and turned to a page that she folded before.

She pointed at one of the questions and stared at Douglas and Fernando with her silver eyes, not saying a word.

“About this question...” Fernando opened his mouth first and exchanged a glance with Douglas. Look, you don’t need to figure out a way to meet Hathaway. She has brought herself to you!

Sharp asked for a glass of hard liquor from Old Green. Enjoying the drink, he watched the teaching and learning.

The whole morning, Douglas and Fernando answered Hathaway’s questions dutifully. She was no longer restrained by the book but dug much deeper. Of course, those questions were not enough to puzzle Douglas and Fernando.

When it was almost noon, Hathaway put back her book, paper, quill, and ink bottle. She thanked them courteously as if they were her real teachers.

“I’ll stay here for another month. Feel free to ask questions if you have any. I’ve rarely seen any child so passionate about mathematics.” When they bid each other farewell, Douglas said intentionally.

Hathaway nodded, indicating that she got it.

Sharp, on the other hand, laughed. “Why don’t you work as Hathaway’s home teacher? I think it will be better than any of your previous jobs.”

Instead of waiting for Douglas to answer, he turned around and left as if it were a joke.

After seeing them off, Fernando chuckled. "It's easier than I think. She truly loves mathematics!"

Douglas looked at the corner where Sharp and Hathaway disappeared, deep in thought, not responding to Fernando's comment.

Then, the two of them returned to Douglas' room to continue their communication and learning. They never left the room again except for lunch and dinner.

Fernando did not say goodbye until it was late at night. Douglas finally rubbed his temples in exhaustion and looked at the starry sky out of the window. Even though he was already an archmage, the thinking and communication of such a high intensity were still too much for him.

Looking at the glittering stars in the night sky, Douglas said in a low voice, "It seems that tomorrow will be another sunny day..."

Suddenly, all the stars were covered in hazy blueness as if they were the reflections in an ocean. Then, the noise of a surging tide came from the sky. The ocean was poured over, and a flood descended from the sky!

Douglas reacted quickly enough. An enormous transparent palm suddenly appeared before him and blocked the tide. Then, rings of silver lightning rose from the surface of his body and rushed into the raging ocean.

In the meantime, Douglas had disappeared.

Suddenly, the blue ocean ebbed like an illusion, and Sharp's chuckle came from all directions.

"You are indeed a sorcerer..."

Throne of Magical Arcana

865 A Lesson

The voice was distant and unpredictable, making it impossible to locate Sharp. In the hotel, Fernando and the other sorcerers who had been alarmed by the collision just now flashed and disappeared.

"Find a way to escape. We'll meet in Lake Ramrouge!" The moment Douglas appeared in a corner, Fernando's telepathic bond already stretched over carefully and quickly and informed him of the rendezvous after they split up.

It was not because he was scared of "Blue Grace" Sharp. Now that Douglas, a ninth-circle archmage, was here, he believed that it was possible for them to kill the enemy if they joined their hands. After all, Douglas knew "Time Stop" and was an excellent archmage, and he was capable of many senior-rank unusual spells himself, which could weaken and limit the enemy.

However, they were in Rentato, which was watched over by many experts. Any great noise would have caught attention. If either of the two persons in the Nekso Palace or the Radiance Church

came, they wouldn't make it out alive at all. The "Sword of Truth" Williamson Hoffenberg had gone to the frontline in Aalto at the behest of the Church, and it was Kritonia, the "Heart of Time", who was guarding the Nekso Palace. It was a name that caused the legendary sorcerers to tremble!

Ever since he distinguished himself, he had followed Williamson Hoffenberg as a young, strong, and vigorous man, killing powerful sorcerers, elves, vampires, demons, and devils one after another and paving a path to legendary with their bodies and blood. Later, he even killed Osseris, a legendary sorcerer known as "Master of Shadows", and the Faceless, a dark legendary knight. He rose to level two of legendary on their skulls, intimidating all his enemies!

One of the battles happened no more than ten years after he became a legendary knight. In a regular operation, he happened upon Osseris, the Master of Shadows and the Sylvanas Magic Empire's governor in Holm.

He was a powerful sorcerer who had lived at least four thousand years. He was so close to level three of legendary but never made the breakthrough. As a result, he was forced to leave Antiffler and replace Viken, the King of Calamities, as the governor of Holm. Later, he was ambushed by Hoffenberg, the Sword of Truth and a saint in the War of Dawn. He was heavily wounded and went missing.

Therefore, the Sylvanas Magic Empire's territory on this side of the Storm Strait lost the leadership. The few lesser legendary sorcerers did not obey each other. Separated and attacked by the Church and the noble knights, they were killed one after another and contributed to the glory of the Sword of Truth, making him one of the nine level-three legendary knights.

However, after Holm fell apart and the new-generation noble knights grew up, Osseris was back to life and ran into Kritonia.

The aftermath of the battle destroyed most eyewitnesses. According to the few survivors, after the Heart of Time destroyed the phylactery of the Master of Shadows, he announced proudly, "You are too old. Both your soul and your magic are rotten..."

It also answered the confusion of some sorcerers. Generally speaking, sorcerers could suppress knights of the same level. It had never been known that a legendary knight could kill a legendary sorcerer that was above their level in a duel. At first, the sorcerers suspected that it was because the Master of Shadows hadn't completely recovered from the fatal wounds. Right now, they had an even more convincing reason.

Yes. Osseris was simply too old. He was close to the limits of his life. Even his soul had started to decay. Of course, the intensity of his spiritual power had plummeted!

Although it made the sorcerers feel better, they were forced to take the problem seriously, which was that not only was the Master of Shadows old, but even the Magic Empire seemed antiquated and decayed.

During the hundreds of years of war, many young grand cardinals and legendary knights had been born. Many of them were as excellent as "Heart of Time", such as Rudolf, the Ruling Angel, and the few grand cardinals before they became the pope. In the Magic Empire, a few new legendary sorcerers had appeared. The air of aging and decaying could be clearly sensed.

As a matter of fact, the speed of advancement was the same as before the War of Dawn. However, nobody cared about the slow advancement during peacetime since legendary sorcerers lived long enough. Right now, many people compared the situation to the sunset, which would inevitably disappear and sink into the darkness despite its lingering splendor at present.

Many old sorcerers even sighed. "The old will eventually be replaced by the young. That is the destiny that cannot be reversed. In front of the young and vigorous Saint Truth and nobles, the sorcerers and the Magic Empires are like rotten bodies that will collapse under the first poke."

For some reason, the thoughts flashed in Douglas' heart quickly, making him feel unusually sad. Then, he controlled his feelings and planned to jump away from Sharp's aim with the shadow and help other sorcerers to escape.

"You go first! Don't mind them!" Old Green suddenly floated in midair and blocked the falling water drops.

His frozen and lifeless left eye became deep, as if a bottomless hole that could absorb all lives was hidden inside.

Douglas knew exactly what Old Green meant. The other sorcerers who hadn't even reached the senior rank could be sacrificed, but if he, a ninth-circle archmage, was killed, there would be no hope for the renaissance of the Magic Empire. However, he still hesitated for a moment. He also sensed that the previous battle did not catch the attention of the church nearby.

In midair, Sharp's voice came in like the sound of running water. "I've blocked the area before I attacked. Nobody will sense anything. There's something I would like to say to you."

Then, he suddenly appeared in the lobby of the hotel. He walked into the bar and poured himself a glass of hard liquor.

Douglas did not attack. Old Green, Fernando, and he looked at each other as they covered the other people who were leaving. They were filled with intense surprise as well as vague hope.

Sharp had voluntarily revealed the matter and kept it a secret from the Church. Was he planning to cooperate with the Union? Had his operation been approved by the Sword of Truth who was far away in Aalto?

“Remember to pay for the liquor and the house damages.” Old Green fell down, resuming the previous stun and depression.

Fernando stepped into the hall and said to Sharp, who was drinking with his eyes closed, “What would you like to talk about?”

Sharp chuckled. “I want to kill someone, but it’s inconvenient for me to do it in person. I’m told that sorcerers accept such contracts.”

“Who is it?” Douglas pressed his hands, hinting Fernando not to be rash.

His calmness and easiness made Fernando swallow his mockery about Sharp’s cowardice and listen to his reply.

Sharp had another mouthful of his drink and smiled again. “Alfonsol. The person I want dead is Alfonsol.”

Alfonsol?

There were plenty of people with such a name, but most of them lived in the countries near the Holy City. In Rentato, few people carried such a name, and only one of them was a nuisance for Sharp to attack!

“Alfonsol, the red robe?” Old Green’s frozen eyes emitted deep and dark brilliance.

Fernando was also quite surprised. The deputy captain of the Sword of Truth’s Knights, as well as the gold knight, was asking the “evil” sorcerers to assassinate a level-nine red robe? That was too weird!

“Yes. He is an extreme worshipper of the Lord. He believes that all the powers go to the Lord, and that nobles are also lambs. So, we haven’t gotten along very well.” Sharp looked at the three of them with a vague smile.

“Alfonsol is a level-nine cleric, the main assistant to ‘Graceful Angel’ Francois, and a real giant of the Inquisition of the Holm parish...” Douglas had collected enough intelligence about Rentato recently. “Graceful Angel” Francois was one of the two saint cardinals who was left by the Saint Truth to defend the territory on this side of the Storm Strait. He was an expert whose name could be prefixed with “Saint”!

Old Green lowered his eyes. “Alfonsol barely leaves Rentato. Who can assassinate him under Francois’ protection? Unless they do not want to survive...”

The previous attack on the Inquisition had raised too much turmoil. Kritonia had taken over the investigation in person. If they allured Alfonsol to leave Rentato by exposing their tracks, “Heart of Time” would possibly come! He wasn’t any easier to deal with than “Graceful Angel” was. Kritonia was known as the legendary knight who was closest to level three!

Even a man as proud and impatient as Fernando dared not accept the contract outrightly. The mission might not be accomplishable even if the whole Union was devoted to it.

“Haha.” Sharp raised his head and laughed aloud, as if he were very delighted. Then, he lowered his head and looked at Douglas and Fernando without the slightest smile in his eyes. “Why? Are you scared?”

He rose and looked down at them. “Your strategy is not bad to attract the nobles to resist the Church. However, you’ve forgotten one thing. This is a game that only experts can play!

“If you cannot kill a level-nine red robe, are you even qualified to play the game of balance? How many legendary sorcerers do you have? How capable are you to resist the Church?

“If you do not have the capabilities, however many things you do, as long as the legendary sorcerers of Aalto are defeated and the Church is spared, your doom will still be inevitable. No nobles will dare to work with you at all.”

He sniffed. “Keep away from Hathaway. If Green weren’t hanging around with you, I would have...”

Pausing for a moment, he walked to the door with his hands behind his back. “Don’t meddle in the battle of giants if you are just a group of rats!”

Fernando blushed. A terrible storm seemed to be rising in his eyes. If Douglas hadn’t been suppressing him in secret, he would’ve burst out long ago.

Throne of Magical Arcana

866 Old Fox

After he stepped out of the inn, Sharp broke like a bubble and disappeared into the dark night. Not moving his eyes back, Old Green asked coarsely, “Are you going to accept his contract?”

“Whether we accept it or not, the most important issue right now is that this place is no longer safe. We have to transfer immediately.” Douglas looked rather solemn.

Fernando was also back to himself. He mumbled, “It’s up to those old men whether or not to accept the contract. What we need to do is to get out of here and set up another relay station.”

It was obvious that, even if the Union was to accept the mission to assassinate Alfonsol and build up a good relationship with the nobles such as Sharp, they wouldn’t want to expose the relay station that was very important for the organization to any strangers. If they wanted to communicate with the nobles, a smaller, one-way channel would be better, say, through Old Green.

Carelessness in such matters would mean the doom of an organization!

Then, fearing that somebody might be eavesdropping, Fernando said to Douglas and Old Green in the telepathic bond, “I’ll see you in the underwater relic of Lake Ramrouge.”

“Alright, you go first. I have to leave certain marks to warn the sorcerers to come.” Old Green looked around at the lobby with obvious regrets.

Fernando mocked, “You should be happy to get rid of this eyesore. What’s to be sorry about?”

“As a matter of fact, this is my family business that my great grandfather started,” Old Green said peacefully without the slightest anger, as if he were talking about somebody else.

Fernando was briefly stunned. Looking at his feet and raising his head, he looked at the wine cabinet behind Old Green with his red, vigorous eyes and said, “Maybe this hotel will be preserved. You are a radiant knight, and you are close to many nobles. It may be put into good use, except that not many sorcerers would frequent this place anymore...”

He rambled on without a theme.

“Get lost already, boy! I do not need your sympathy!” Old Green suddenly lashed out and interrupted Fernando.

Fernando blushed and snorted, “I’ll sympathize with the black-clawed dogs before I sympathize with a half-dead old man like you!”

He left immediately after that.

Old Green raised his jaw, hinting Douglas to follow him. He then chuckled. “Don’t the necromancers always say that your life begins when you are dead?”

“What do those smelly, rotten bodies know about life?” Fernando said without looking back.

“Even my hair is older than you, boy. What do you know about life?” Old Green did not give in at all.

Helpless, Douglas watched the two of them fight until Fernando was out of the gate and into the darkness of the night.

...

Under the starlight, the lakes were glimmering peacefully. Since there were many such lakes, they were scattered on the ground like pearls and connected into dreamy necklaces.

“This place deserves to be called ‘Land of Thousand Lakes’...” Douglas complimented while he floated above the lake and took a deep breath of the fresh air.

Fernando asked in surprise, “You know ‘Land of Thousand Lakes’?”

“Of course, its fame has been brought to Antiffler by the traveling sorcerers,” Douglas replied.

“Is it beautiful at all?” Fernando murmured in a low voice. Then, he said, “This is Lake Ramrouge. Follow me.”

Douglas looked at the lake, only to discover that it wasn’t huge. One might have thought that it was just a swamp. Could there be any underwater relic in it?

The two of them cast spells and jump into the water, sinking to the bottom of the lake quickly.

Noticing Douglas' surprise, Fernando explained in a telepathic bond, "Some idiotic sorcerer built this. Perhaps he intended to connect all the Land of Thousand Lakes. However, it is thanks to his idiocy that this relic hasn't been discovered. The Church would never imagine that such a small and unresourceful lake has a relic."

A cave was hidden below the cave. It did not seem to be established for human beings but was more like the nest of certain aquatic creatures.

Fernando vaporized his body and crawled in. Douglas followed him without any hesitation.

After passing through a zigzagging "tunnel", Douglas found himself in the middle of a palace that was crowded with sorcerers. They were quite alarmed about the newcomers, but after they saw Fernando's familiar face, they turned around and focused on their own business again.

One of the senior-rank sorcerers performed magic to examine whether or not Fernando was authentic. In that aspect, sorcerers, known as "rats in the gutter", were much more vigilant than the Inquisition, because those who were not vigilant enough were already dead.

"Now, this is more like a place where sorcerers gather..." Douglas said in both relief and comfort.

"Douglas, Fernando, you've come at the perfect moment. The president has learned what happened just now and wants you to meet him." Lauren, who escaped early under Fernando's cover, came to them.

“Is this the headquarters of the Union?” Douglas found it odd. Fernando did not mention it before.

Fernando also found it odd. “Is the president here?”

“Yes.” Lauren nodded and observed Fernando up and down. “It’s good that you are fine. Mr. President planned to meet Douglas here and hold a meeting if it weren’t for the accident in the Roasted Fish Hotel...”

It seems that they are still wary of me and were reluctant to let me know their headquarters so soon... Douglas thought. However, he was not bothered and simply nodded his head. “Lauren, please lead us to Mr. President...”

“It’s only because the mission they gave was too dumb...” Following Douglas, Fernando cursed.

After they passed a channel made of stone bricks, they reached a palace that was decorated with weird patterns. An old man whose hair was all white but whose spirits were high strode out and greeted them, “Welcome to the Union of Sorcerers, Douglas. You are a distinguished sorcerer, and your studies on curves and irregular shapes are better than ours. I hope I can learn from you sometime.”

Douglas was slightly stunned. Did Arnold, the president of the Union of Sorcerers, also know that he was studying fluxion?

Fluxion was the name that he gave to the mathematical problems he worked on, although he was thinking to change the name at some point.

Douglas was soon back to himself from his surprise. Arnold must have been paying attention to his communication with Fernando. The guy postponed the meeting perhaps to give himself enough time for observation.

As a leader of a fairly-large magic organization, he was certainly not a simple person!

“The research of many great sorcerers in the past inspired me,” Douglas said modestly.

Arnold had a few wrinkles, and his face was still red. He pointed at Douglas and smiled as he said, “Don’t be modest. If your research works out, it will be easier to learn and construct all spells! What a bright future it will be! Alright, let’s focus on the contract of the Blue Demon first. Right, this is League. You’ve met before. This is Ramon, this is Veronica. They are both the deputy presidents of the Union.”

He introduced the few people who came with him. League had plenty of wrinkles and a hawk nose, Ramon was tall and slender with a long face, and Veronica had green eyes that looked like emeralds. They were all in the classic robes of the Magic Empire.

Douglas greeted them and smiled at a brown-haired young man next to Arnold. “Gallos, it’s been a long time.”

With a playful smile, the young man replied, “I did not expect you to do something like attacking the Inquisition. It’s more like Fernando’s style.”

Gallos was the person who introduced Douglas to the Union of Sorcerers. He was Fernando and Lauren’s friend, Arnold’s student, and a sixth-circle senior-rank sorcerer.

“Hehe. Do you envy me?” Fernando certainly would not give in.

Gallos chuckled and looked at his feet without continuing the conversation, but President Arnold asked a question, “What’s your opinion on the Blue Demon’s contract?”

Lauren, who led them here, quietly exited the palace and closed the gate.

League said gloomily, “He’s only warning us with the mission. There’s no need to take it seriously.”

“What if we accomplish it for real? Will he see our value and decide to work with us?” Ramon pulled a long face and objected to League.

“First of all, we need to be capable of accomplishing it!” League and Veronica said at the same time.

The meeting immediately fell silent. Even Fernando did not dare to brag that Alfonsol was not difficult to kill. After all, Kritonia had his eyes on the Union.

Arnold seemed satisfied with the situation. With his smile unchanged, he coughed for a moment and said, “It’s not entirely impossible for us to accomplish the mission.”

“President, you must be kidding!” League said seriously.

“It’s indeed impossible if we count on only our own strength, but what if the other magic organizations cooperate with us? They do not have the attention of the Heart of Time.” Arnold smiled; he was in a good temper. Then, before anyone opened their mouth, he went on and said, “I’ve been busy contacting the other magic associations. As it happens, I’ve invited many magic organizations to visit Arnold and discuss cooperation. That’s why I set the meeting in this place instead of our headquarters, because ‘Allyn’ is also near Rentato.”

He sort of explained why they did not bring Douglas to the headquarters.

“President, are you confident to convince those organizations to cooperate with us?” Veronica brought up the key issue.

Arnold smiled as cunningly as an old fox. “If they know that we are working with the Blue Demon, deputy captain of the Sword of Truth’s Knights, they will be glad to cooperate with us in the mission. It’s not just our strategy to attract the nobles to resist the Church.”

“Since when have we been working with the Blue Demon?” Even Ramon was confused.

Arnold chuckled. “Since after we accomplish the mission to assassinate Arnold with other groups, when he attaches more importance to our strength.”

Fernando’s lips twitched. The president was too sleazy!

“Which organizations will come to Allyn?” League thought for a moment and asked cautiously.

Arnold nodded his head. “Rest assured. The organizations I’ve invited are all slightly weaker than us. They are not the legendary associations such as ‘Cabin of Palmeira’, ‘Scythe of Death’, or ‘Hysterical Dance’. What deserves our attention are ‘Red Eye’, ‘Supreme Soul’, ‘Shadow Singers’, and ‘Tower of Destroyers’, which have one or two ninth-circle archmages. There are also a dozen common organizations that do not have ninth-circle sorcerers.

“Douglas, Fernando, and I will attend the meeting later.”

Throne of Magical Arcana

867 The City in the Sky

“Why them?”

The person who raised the question was Veronica, a blond gorgeous beauty. The sorcerers who were adept at body modifications were often on two extremities. Some of them did not care about their images at all, and they transformed them in the most powerful way.

For example, they could replace their left eye with “Stub of the Eye Demon”, their right eye with the eye of the Servant of Death, and their beard with the tentacles of the Mind Stealer. As a result, their looks could be most horrifying, making them the synonym of “creepy” for the ordinary people. In the meantime, they were also the image of all sorcerers in the Saint Truth’s propaganda. Of course, in the current phase, those sorcerers had to change their appearances before they went out, or they would be moving targets for the night watchers.

The other sorcerers, on the other hand, paid great attention to their looks during their self-modification, so their faces would be more and more delicate and pretty. Veronica was such an eighth-circle sorcerer who was good at bloodline integration and physical modification. For

example, her pointy ears added cuteness to her glamor. It was exactly a feature of the elves' bloodline.

President Arnold chuckled. "The meeting to be held in Allyn is mainly to facilitate communication and eliminate misunderstandings..."

It was obviously the "formalities" that he spoke to the other magic associations. Then, he suddenly changed the topic and said, "Therefore, as the host, we have to refrain ourselves in the meeting. Otherwise, they will be too wary of us to come, and the cooperation will be sabotaged.

"Of the three representatives, I am the president and the main convener. I have to host the meeting. It's basic courtesy. Douglas is our archmage who recently joined. His presence will let other people sense the attraction and the real capabilities of the Union. Fernando is our most distinguished young sorcerer and the most hopeful candidate to become an archmage. He will show the other groups the bright prospects of the Union..."

Unlike the usual, Fernando did not throw out mockery. The other groups would be awed by the simple, refrained demonstration of strength. The president had completely justified himself. He truly deserved to be the president!

League and Veronica both accepted the explanation. Without any argument, they asked about the details of "Red Eye", "Supreme Soul", and the other groups. Although they knew a lot of things about such groups from before, Arnold, who had just visited their leaders, certainly knew better.

Arnold seized the opportunity to introduce those organizations to Douglas. "The greatest feature of the people of the Asso Empire is their red eyes, as can be seen on Fernando. Of course, the redness of his pupils is rare even in the Asso Empire. 'Red Eye' is an organization set up by some surviving sorcerers of the Asso Empire, who hope that they can restore their country..."

“‘Supreme Soul’ is an organization of necromancers. It is said that it has something to do with ‘Scythe of Death’...

“‘Shadow Singers’ is a secret organization that Osseris, the Master of Shadows, prepared for his return. However, it has been too badly struck by the Heart of Time and is not even as strong as us...

“‘Tower of Destroyers is mostly made of sorcerers of the school of elements. It’s one of the few major branches of the Will of Elements left after it was destroyed by the Sword of Truth and the clerics a hundred years ago...”

Douglas was no stranger to the Will of Elements. After the Master of Shadows was heavily wounded and went missing, the legendary sorcerers in Holm were divided and fought on their own. Some of them founded their own organizations. The Will of Elements was a legendary group that was very active in the period. In its heyday, it could be compared to the “Cabin of Palmeira” which had a long history. However, it was still destroyed in the end. Most of the sorcerers were killed, and the valuable files and items were carved up by the Hoffenberg family and the Saint Truth.

Arnold explained the history, members, and leaders of the four magic organizations in detail. In the end, he sighed and said, “I hope that the cooperation will go well. As long as we kill Alfonsol and intimidate the Blue Demon, I will be able to establish a partnership with the few Excellencies.”

He looked at Douglas solemnly. “The Blue Demon is quite right that we are not strong enough to join a battle of ‘giants’. However, this side of the strait is not entirely devoid of legends!”

He did not mention the possibility that the Church would burst into a fury after Alfonsol was killed and that Sharp would work harder to strike the magic organizations instead of softening his attitude, a possibility that he, League, Ramon, and Veronica knew very well. However, in such a situation, they could only take risks. If they waited until they were confident, there would be no chance for them to take risks!

“Mr. President, how many legends are on this side of the strait?” As a native of Antiffler, Douglas did not know the situation in Holm very well.

Arnold smiled. “Other than those who went to Aalto to join the defense, there are only three legendary sorcerers on this side of the strait. Of course, the legends all have strange ways to preserve their lives. Perhaps some of them were not really killed by the Saint Truth but have only been hiding somewhere.

“There are two legends in Cabin of Palmeira, namely the Witch of Iceland and the Lord of Frigidity. Between them, the Lord of Frigidity is stronger, so he went to reinforce Aalto, and the Witch of Iceland, who is younger, is left to defend the organization...

“‘Scythe of Death’ has a terrible ‘Liege of Death’. He’s a seasoned legend of the Asso Empire, but he is not close to the legends of Aalto, so he did not reinforce them...

“The legends of ‘Hysterical Dance’ had mostly perished, but decades ago, a remarkable ninth-circle sorcerer among them made an advancement successfully. His legendary class is ‘Eye of Curse’, and his name is Atlant Forman. He’s very young...”

Douglas listened carefully and repeated the things that he should pay special attention to in a low voice, “Witch of Iceland... Liege of Death... Eye of Curse...”

“That’s basically everything. Douglas, Fernando, prepare yourselves. We’ll go to Allyn tomorrow.” Arnold nodded his head.

...

The sky seemed to have been burnt up by a fire, and the earth was red but dim. Arnold, Douglas, and Fernando had transformed into fat rats that were common on this plain, running among plants and rocks.

This was a plain northwest of Rentato. It was surrounded by mountains, with a lot of villages scattered on it. It did not look like a place where the stealthy sorcerers would hide at all.

“When the City in the Sky collapsed, it caused a huge hole at the foot of the mountain and an earthquake that buried itself. Therefore, it’s actually below the ground at the edge of the plain.” Arnold introduced the location of Allyn to Douglas.

Douglas, who was currently a chubby gray-haired mouse, said through the telepathic bond, “It must’ve been badly ruined, hasn’t it?”

“Yes. The central alchemical lives are all gone. There is no intact building in it right now...” Fernando spoke instead of Arnold. He was now a red-eyed delicate mouse.

The three rats went deep into the ground along with the real mouse nests. Surpassing many obstacles, they reached the underground channel that the Union of Sorcerers established earlier.

Thereafter, they turned back into human beings and walked down the road that was made of giant stones. There were no commonly-seen murals and patterns on the wall but only uneven rocks.

As he walked, Douglas came to a sudden stop and looked ahead in fascination. He saw something magnificent that was squeezed by mud and rocks.

It was very enormous and made up an upside-down mountain, with a pointy bottom and a flat top. Many symbols were embedded in it in the most astounding way.

However, the magic towers above its surface had all collapsed. Even the best preserved ones had only three to four floors left. Also, deep cracks could be found on the main body, almost penetrating through it.

“Is this the City in the Sky...” His eyes full of passion, Douglas remarked in mixed feelings.

Arnold allowed him to watch for a while and said, “I’ll talk to the leaders of the other magic organizations first and try to reach a common understanding before the meeting. You can go around and make acquaintance with the sorcerers of other groups.”

At this moment, the members of the other magic organizations had come, which kept the sorcerers of the Union and their families who lived in this base rather busy. Of course, the sorcerers in the senior rank and above were all hiding around and entered the place with simulated images in case it was the Union’s trap. It was already their habit to be cautious.

“Alright.” Douglas nodded his head and flew to the City in the Sky that had fallen to the bottom of the ground with Fernando.

After he landed on it, Douglas realized that the sorcerers of the Union had already established and repaired some of the uncomplicated buildings. Also, since plenty of sorcerers from other organizations had come, a market had spontaneously formed at the central square, where everybody exchanged their magic models, knowledge, materials, resources, potions, and recipes.

“Hello, gentlemen, would you like the modified Malzman that I invented recently? It can stimulate the soul effectively and increase the speed of the spiritual power’s recovery.” Because Douglas and Fernando were standing at the edge of the market, a plain-looking young sorcerer stood up and promoted his alchemical product with a smile.

Malzman was a legendary sorcerer who invented a potion that could help with the growth of spiritual power.

Hearing that, Douglas turned around curiously and stared at the bubbling blue drug. “How much can it increase?”

“It varies between 1% and 5% for different people. I’d tried hundreds of different ratios before I finally came up with this improved recipe by accident,” the young sorcerer said proudly.

Nodding his head, Douglas asked cautiously, “Then why is your modification able to improve the effect? What’s the mechanism behind it?”

The young sorcerer’s expression immediately darkened. “Only real customers are welcome here!”

Throne of Magical Arcana

868 Quarrel

“I’m not being unreasonable. If you don’t figure out those questions, you will be relying on nothing but experience, instincts, and luck when you modify your drug. It was already fortunate of you to have found out a beneficial change after several hundred tries, but what about later? Are you going to try every possibility and every combination? In such a case, you will never succeed without thousands of experiments...” Douglas replied very carefully.

Solemnly, the young sorcerer pointed at his product and said, “The magic book says that the Crimson Grass plus the Fish Eye Fruit plus the stem of the Soul Wood can stimulate one’s spiritual power. My product is a combination of their natural effects, a summary of the sorcerers’ generations of research, a law of nature, and a truth that is beyond any doubts! I won’t sell my drug to you. Please go somewhere else!”

Perhaps because he was just freed from teachers and magic books, the young sorcerer told him the mechanism of his recipe even though he hated the unreasonable guy. Of course, the specific ratio of the ingredients was his business secret.

Douglas nodded. Right when the young sorcerer held his head high again, he suddenly said, “I know that the Crimson Grass plus the Fish Eye Fruit plus the stem of the Soul Wood can stimulate the spiritual power. It’s an empirical law, but why?”

Fernando tried to hold back his smile and almost blew a whistle. It was very fun for him to watch other people be driven crazy by Douglas’ whys.

The young sorcerer’s face was the best example of “astounded”. Uttering some meaningless sounds, he turned around at the sorcerers nearby and murmured, “What a freak!”

Actually, the sorcerers had summarized the synergy among most materials and gave explanations of different schools. For example, some claimed that it was a representative of the four-element theory, and some said that it was because of the cycle of life.

The young sorcerer knew quite a lot, and he was more inclined to the four-element explanation. However, he did not want to talk to the weirdo at all, fearing that he would be faced with a bunch more whys. It reminded him of the feeling when he could not provide satisfactory answers to a rigorous teacher.

The sorcerers around watched in either gloom or amusement. None of them were interested in meddling with someone they were not familiar with.

Not caring at all that he was called a freak, Douglas said sincerely, "Have you ever read 'Elemental Crown of Magic Potions'? It may explain part of the reasons, and it may be applied in practice, but there is still plenty of self-consistency. I don't think it really answers the questions."

Gritting his teeth, the young sorcerer murmured, "Ignore him! Ignore him!"

He had the feeling that he was surrounded by hundreds of mosquitoes, which made him rather agitated.

Douglas was quite a reasonable man when he didn't ask whys. He shook his head with a smile and said, "I know a thing or two about this field. If you are interested in the question just now, you are free to communicate with me. I am Douglas, and I'm with the Union of Sorcerers. What about you?"

The young man was very handsome and scholarly. He did not intend to talk to Douglas, but something his teacher said to him popped up in his mind.

"You are the most gifted young sorcerer in our organization, but you've been too devoted to books to know how to communicate with other people. We represent the Shadow Singers in the meeting in Allyn. So, I must remind you that you must not be too weak or too arrogant. Courtesy is very important..."

Courtesy, courtesy... The young sorcerer struggled to reply. He said, “I am Owen, from the Shadow Singers.”

“I just took a look. Your potion must be very good.” Douglas knew better than continuing to pester Owen and left his stand. Owen was greatly relieved.

“You can totally develop a spell named ‘Douglas’ Whys’. It will definitely stun the enemy.” Fernando followed him and made fun of him.

Douglas smiled and did not say anything. He carefully observed the sorcerers who had been gathered in the square. They were from different organizations, and their strengths, genders, looks, and personalities varied. The only thing they had in common was that they were all slightly depressed and overwhelmed.

It was not because something bad was happening, but because their living conditions had brought irreversible psychological changes that had been reflected in their aura.

“Skin of the Blue Dragon! It contains the patterns of dozens of spells and can significantly improve the corresponding magic!” On their way, they suddenly heard a girl peddling “Skin of the Blue Dragon”.

The blue dragons were most famous for their supernatural abilities in lightning and water. Their skin was not only an alchemical material but an important focus of the sorcerers’ studies.

Therefore, when Douglas and Fernando looked over, the girl’s stand had been crowded by sorcerers, who were all observing the incomplete skin of the blue dragon in silence.

For Fernando who was good at lightning and storms, the skin of the blue dragon was most precious. So, he walked to the girl's stand. After confirming the authenticity of the material, he asked, "What do you want in exchange for the skin of the blue dragon?"

The other sorcerers were angry about Fernando who squeezed through the crowd, but nobody said anything. They all wanted to hear the girl's needs.

The girl had flaxen hair and pupils in a similar color. Both pretty and vigorous, she smiled and said, "I want to exchange for the destruction of the Church. Can you do that?"

Before Fernando roared out, she ended the joke in time. "I need all the middle-rank magic books on transformation, body modification, and bloodline melting. Do you have any?"

Her answer was rather vague. It was obvious that she intended to pick a favorite book from the sorcerers.

"I do!" Fernando had always been impatient. He immediately took out many books and floated them in the air, before he looked at the sorcerers around with a "This material is mine and bite me if you are not cool with that" look on his face.

The sorcerers were somewhat angry at first, but somebody said in a low voice, "He's Fernando of the Union."

"The Fernando who attacked the Inquisition?"

“The Fernando who took down the Predator?”

The sorcerers immediately whispered among themselves. Many people who planned to compete with Fernando backed off. That was a brutal and strong man!

Fernando did not realize that he was so famous. He wasn't even as respected as now when he made it to the Cleansing List. He was rather puzzled.

“How about it? Are you satisfied with my books?” Fernando decided to ignore other people and simply asked the girl.

At this moment, another sorcerer stood out. “You may be Fernando, but so what? All the organizations are gathering today. Is he going to steal an item that is being regularly traded?”

Fernando was about to roar at the sorcerer when the girl suddenly said, “I would like to give it to Mr. Fernando! He's my hero! Over the past century, he is the first sorcerer who has the courage to attack the Inquisition and kill the traitors!”

Fernando was stunned. Since when could “reputation” contribute to business-making? Was the girl still so innocent?

The competitive sorcerer dared not argue anymore and left in a hurry.

“As a matter of fact, it was Douglas, the ninth-circle archmage next to me, who killed the Predator.” Fernando would never steal other people's credit.

An archmage?

The sorcerers around looked at Douglas, feeling even luckier that they did not conflict with Fernando.

“You’re both my heroes! I am Erica. I am a third-circle sorcerer from a small organization,” the girl said with a sweet smile, which was soon replaced by melancholy. “It’s a shame that there are fewer and fewer heroes like you. Everybody is too used to failure and hiding to dream for a victory.”

Her bluntness made all the sorcerers fall into silence. They thought of the immense pressure and the boundless darkness before their eyes.

“What can we do? The Church has so many legendary experts, and the pope is well beyond the peak of legendary. What can we do...” In the crowd, someone said angrily and desperately, “If only Mr. Viken, Mr. Maskelyne, and the rest of them hadn’t gone missing... With so many level-three legends, the Church wouldn’t have developed at all...”

“I hardly think so!” Somebody argued loudly, “The pope is as strong as a demigod. The Light of Stars was killed by him, and the Liege of Death was ‘reincarnated’ with a strength less than level three. Even the two top legends could not stop the pope. Why do you think Maskelyne and Viken could?”

The words that praised the Church immediately invoked curses. People of Red Eye cursed the Sylvanas Magic Empire for being too devoted to internal conflicts at the critical moment, which caused the destruction of the Asso Empire first. The Liege of Death only returned through the forbidden approach, but he was so weakened that he dared not even challenge the Sword of Truth.

The people of Shadow Singers also cursed other sorcerers for not being united. Otherwise, the Church wouldn't have developed at all, and the pope wouldn't have become so strong!

The necromancers of the Supreme Soul were not good at quarreling, but their gloomy eyes were nonetheless chilly. They seemed to believe that the main reason for their failure was that so many sorcerers were unwilling to offer their soul and body. Otherwise, they would've raised an enormous and tough army of servants that would sweep across the Church. The divine power of the Church was most effective on the necromancers, so they hated and were scared of the Church the most.

The elementalists of Tower of Destroyers joined the fight, maintaining that the three magic empires made too many mistakes at the beginning and gave too much room for the Church to develop. Otherwise, the situation today would have been different.

"Perhaps our magic has already fallen behind..." In the middle of their argument, a desperate sorcerer blurted out without thinking, "How many legendary experts have emerged in the Church in the past three hundred years? What about our side? Perhaps the divine power is the future..."

They all fell silent as the moment poked everyone's wound. Then, curses broke out.

"Traitor! You are a traitor!"

"Our magic is much more abundant and mysterious than the divine power!"

"Does the divine power have so many ways to save your life?"

Erica, who was selling the skin of the blue dragon, did not say anything under the noises. She backed off and heaved a sigh before saying to Fernando and Douglas, “How devastating... It’s great that we have heroes like you.”

“Desperation calls for changes...” Looking at the remains of the magic towers at the center of Allyn, Douglas’ eyes were deep and thoughtful.

Clang!

A bell was knocked, appeasing the fight in the square, because the joint meeting of dozens of magic organizations was about to begin.

Throne of Magical Arcana

869 Cooperators

It had been many years since the Union of Sorcerers started to dig the City in the Sky. The central area had been cleaned, and a lot of magic towers and houses had been set up. If it weren’t for the research value of the other debris, the first scene Douglas saw would have definitely not been as dilapidated as this. Right now, a magic tower near the relic of the central magic tower sent out the sound of a bell being hit. According to the deal, it marked the beginning of the meeting.

The sorcerers who were having a huge fight in the square reluctantly shut their mouths, unsatisfied that the rare opportunity to unleash their complaints was over. They slowly surged to the five-story tall magic tower.

“Those old men must’ve exchanged their opinions in private...” Fernando mumbled. The real agreements had almost always been reached before the meeting, and the meeting was only an occasion for announcements.

Douglas watched the sorcerers come from all directions; his eyes deep and thoughtful. It was not until the square was cleared that he finally sighed. “Let’s go in.”

“Do you feel helpless about their argument? In such a time of peril and despair, they still refuse to let go of their biases and selfishness. To be honest, I have zero confidence in their future after seeing the fight just now.” Fernando moved forward while complaining.

Douglas shook his head and said in a low voice, “Everybody is selfish. So, a sincere cooperation is not based on the complete abandonment of selfishness, but on the demonstration of your strength, so that everybody understands that it is in their best interest to fight by your side.

“I don’t mean the strength in the regular sense. It means so much more. For example, even if we are not strong enough yet, as long as we can convince other people that our path is hopeful and we can lead them on it, it will also be our ‘strength’.”

He was solemn and did not have the slightest desperation or anger.

“Isn’t it the process to build up their confidence in us through various approaches? It’s a sophisticated skill in the school of illusion,” Fernando derided Douglas out of habit.

Douglas turned around to look at Fernando. “You know the school of illusion very well?”

Personally, he was not good at the theories of the school of illusion. He was capable of a lot of illusions, but he never studied them deeply.

“My teacher was a great scholar. Before he was killed, he had been in touch with many archmages of the school of illusion. So, I know a lot of sorcerers who specialize in that.” Fernando mentioned his teacher but did not seem to be close to him.

Douglas did not keep asking because they had reached the magic tower. A middle-aged man who was wearing the arcana badge of the Union of Sorcerers was waiting by the door. “Are you Mr. Douglas? Mr. President asked you to go to the living room in the wing on arrival.”

He recognized Douglas through Fernando.

“Alright,” Douglas replied politely.

It slightly surprised the middle-aged man, because archmages were mostly very arrogant in his impression, even including someone as kind and amiable as President Arnold.

Many stone chairs had been raised in the hall. Douglas and Fernando stepped into the living room.

“Douglas, let me introduce you,” Arnold greeted him with a smile like a kind old man.

Douglas was as steady as before, but Fernando chuckled in a low voice. Judging from the old fox’s good mood, the negotiation must have gone really well.

Hearing Douglas' name, the dozen sorcerers in the living room all looked over. Some were wary, some curious, and some were hostile. Was he the archmage who was capable of "Time Stop" and who killed the Predator?

Arnold put his hands on Douglas' shoulder and pointed at a fat old man. "This is Nielson, leader of Red Eye and an archmage. Even though he looks fat, his body is as sturdy as that of a gold knight."

Douglas immediately understood what Nielson was good at. Perhaps his every body part had been fixed with a certain special ability. His current appearance was nothing but camouflage.

Besides his body figure that left a deep impression, Nielson's ruby eyes were also very attractive. When he smiled, the fat on his cheeks jiggled. "I've always looked forward to Antiffler. The archmages from there are truly remarkable."

He said that he looked forward to it, but there wasn't any earnestness in his tone.

Understanding the feud of the two empires very well, Douglas nodded with a smile, not bothered by Nielson's attitude.

Pretending that he did not hear Nielson's indication, Arnold continued, "This is Amanata, a student to the Master of Shadows and one of the leaders of Shadow Singers."

Amanata, covered in a black magic robe, sat in a shadow in the corner. He merely nodded as a greeting after Arnold's introduction. If it weren't for his male name, Douglas couldn't have even told his gender.

Arnold joked, “Shadow Singers always favor shadows.”

Not far away from Amanata, there was a sorcerer whose air was cold and gloomy. He was wearing a black glamorous robe, and his head only had the white skull left, with needle-like dim red fire bouncing in his eyes. He was a classic lich.

“This is Congus, the archmage who single handedly created ‘Supreme Soul’. He was praised by the Master of Shadows in person, who said that he is very likely to become a legendary sorcerer.” Arnold introduced the lich who was no weaker than Nielson or Amanata.

Congus opened his mouth. His voice was so unpleasant that it sounded like someone whetting a rusty sword. “My friends in Antiffler never mentioned you.”

He seemed very close to Antiffler.

“Because there were too many sorcerers stronger than me in Antiffler,” Douglas replied modestly. “Also, I was a weirdo.”

“Still, Antiffler was destroyed by the pope,” Nielson interrupted.

Congus looked at him and said coldly, “At least the empire hasn’t perished yet, but as for Asso...”

“Cough, cough, cough.” Arnold stopped the upcoming quarrel with coughs and introduced the lady who was playing with her red hair in boredom. “This is our beautiful Ms. Priscilla, the controller of Tower of Destroyers and an elementalist who is good at Cracking (Advanced).”

“Hey, Arnold, do you want me to give you one?” Priscilla made fun of Arnold with a vague smile before she extended her fair hand. “‘Time Stop’ and ‘Cracking (Advanced)’ are the best match. It’s a shame that I am incapable of the former. I hope that I can learn from you sometime.”

She was probably the most friendly responder.

“I always look forward to Cracking (Advanced), my lady.” Naturally, Douglas shook her hands courteously.

Fernando followed him and murmured to himself, “Is it really possible to work with those guys who were all minding their own business?”

Arnold then introduced Douglas and Fernando to the leaders of the other organizations, but he did not mention anything about cooperation, as if it were just trivia that had been decided.

Arnold was friendly and humorous throughout the whole process. That was probably why he was the convener instead of any other leader.

“Alright. It’s time for us to join the meeting. Let’s tell everybody the refreshing news.” In the end, he pointed at the gate.

All the experts stood up and walked out while following Arnold.

Because the safety of the meeting was not guaranteed, they had come with clones and simulated images, and they did not bring many sorcerers with them. The hall was not full.

After the leaders came out, the whispers in the hall were gone.

“Everybody, the War of Dawn, as named by the Church, has been going on for more than three hundred years. Many of you probably never lived life when magic was supreme. You were born in panic and depression, you grew in darkness and desperation, and you will probably die in the fire.” After the leaders sat down, Arnold began his speech.

His heavy opening further silenced the hall. The older sorcerers remembered the last glory of the empire, and the younger sorcerers remembered their own experiences, but they shared the common dread against the nightmarish Church.

After a brief pause, Arnold went on and said, “The power of individuals is so weak in the darkness. Only if we help each other can we cut the thorns and embrace the dawn. This meeting is to inform everybody that the organizations present will abandon our internal conflicts and fight together for our living space.”

In such a devastating environment, any good news could be pictured into a wonderful future. Therefore, everybody was excited by what Arnold said. If so many organizations were united, they would probably be able to resist a parish without legends...

Fernando snorted in despise but did not say anything.

Arnold did not say anything about a coalition. He knew that it was not realistic. Without enough power, uniting so many self-involved organizations would only collapse his own organization.

After describing the beautiful future, Arnold ended his speech. At this moment, a sorcerer stood up and asked, "What living space are we going to obtain in the future?"

Now that the excitement died down, the sorcerers were more suspicious and worried. Their experience told them that prudence meant a long life because they barely had any chance to start over if they made the wrong choice.

"Hey, you are not as stupid as I thought," Fernando mocked in a low voice.

It was impossible for Arnold to speak of the terms of cooperation. So, he merely said, "Our successful cooperation will be an example for other people. More and more sorcerers will join us, even the legendary ones... The Church is definitely not invincible. Many legends have been gathered in Aalto. Also, the Church's enemies include vampires, dragons, sea clans, elves, demons, and devils..."

The audience's hope dwarfed their suspicion for now. Also, as elites of their respective groups, they could tell that the leaders had secretly reached an agreement, so they simply narcotized themselves with the beautiful future.

"Yes. We can cooperate with the supernatural creatures and absorb magic elements from them."

"But can magic really compare to the divine power? At least when it comes to yielding legendary experts..."

After Arnold's speech, the sorcerers had a lot of random thoughts. Some remembered the benefits of working with supernatural creatures and the development of magic, and some remembered the frustration of magic since the beginning of the War of Dawn... Hope, fear, desperation, and expectation overwhelmed them.

Nielson, Congus, Priscilla, Amanata, and the rest of them gave a brief speech to show support, but none of them revealed the terms of cooperation.

"Since we are partners, allow me to introduce the sorcerer next to me, Douglas from Antiffler. He's good with 'Time Stop', and he attacked an Inquisition with Fernando." Arnold showed the power of his Union in satisfaction.

People whispered in exclamations. Arnold nodded at their reaction and said to Douglas with a smile, "Why don't you say something to everyone?"

Douglas stood up gravely. Arnold was rather stunned. Why did he look like that? What was he going to say?

Fernando also noticed Douglas' strange expression; the man he was not wearing his usual warm and comforting smile. He also did not know why Douglas was like this. As for Nielson and the rest of them who were not familiar with Douglas, they sensed no anomaly at all.

Douglas looked around at the hall, silencing the whispers of the sorcerers, before he spoke in a low but clear voice.

"Ladies and gentlemen, many years ago, the esteemed ancestors of mankind learned how to make use of spiritual powers from dragons, elves, giants, demons, devils, and the other magical creatures. Then, by analyzing their body structures and blood qualities, we melted their bloodlines, modified our bodies, and came up with many meditation methods to build up our spiritual powers.

We also created various kinds of magic by copying the magic patterns on their bodies, thereby gaining enormous powers. We drove the demons back into the abyss and kicked the devils back into hell. The giants, elves, and dragons either retreated to the uninhabited mountains, wilderness, and alternate dimensions, or bent before our feet.”

His opening, which was a brief review of the origin and glory of the age of magic, did not make Arnold and Fernando feel easy because Douglas was certainly not someone who would bring it up for nothing. The sorcerers, on the other hand, seemed to have sensed the glory at the beginning. They all looked rather refreshed.

Throne of Magical Arcana

870 Speech

While the sorcerers dwelt in the glory of the past, Douglas’ voice was even more solemn. “The glorious triumphs made the ancient sorcerers even more determined to pursue power. They initiated conquests in the abyss, the hell, and all the alternate dimensions. After the Saint Truth rose, the three Magic Empires collapsed in just three hundred years. The glory in the past has turned into the bitterness, confusion, and desperation today.”

The glory of the past was shattered, replaced by the cruelty of the reality. Owen, Erica, and the sorcerers from different organizations felt that a bucket of cold water was poured on their heads. Although they were somewhat prepared, they could help but sigh in gloom and frustration. They speculated that Douglas meant the same as Arnold and the other archmages by drawing a comparison of the splendid past and the miserable reality so that all the sorcerers would be more hopeful about the cooperation and a bright future.

“But the Church is really too powerful! And they do have angels!”

“The time it takes for sorcerers to grow strong is not lengthened, but it is too long compared to what it takes for the clerics...”

“Will the cooperation really work? We are more likely to be annihilated if we are too big a target! It’s possible that we will be safer if we split apart!”

“Only by surviving first can we hope to cooperate with the supernatural creatures, study them, and surpass the limits of magic...”

All kinds of thoughts rolled in the hearts of the seemingly silent sorcerers. Even leaders such as Nielson and Priscilla had similar feelings.

Although they were working hard to develop their organizations, seeking for a chance of survival and cooperating for a beautiful future, it would definitely be a lie if they claimed that they were absolutely confident without the slightest fear!

They were pressing forward with reasonable passion and confidence because there wasn’t a second path. People were always more determined when they were left with no choice.

Of course, it was one way out to join the Church and become a night watcher, but for the leaders of those organizations, they were unwilling to give up themselves and become a dog of the Church before the war in the west was settled. What if Aalto beat the enemy back? On the other hand, if Aalto fell and most of the legends were killed, whether they surrendered or not would make little difference.

Arnold thought the same. He nodded at Douglas’ speech in satisfaction. Fernando, on the other hand, secretly mumbled, “Was the empty talk all he wanted to say?”

Douglas pressed his right hand to stress his tone. “Dear ladies and gentlemen, it is time for us to calm down. Instead of being bewitched by power, we should calm down and consider certain questions.” In the ancient Magic Empire, sorcerer was the only gender. They did not start addressing the audience in different genders until the modern day.

Well? What questions?

All the sorcerers, including the experts like Congus, were briefly stunned. Questions about the coalition? How radical the guy is! But does it have anything to do with being bewitched by power? Is he going to stress that solidarity is power? That must be a joke. All the people here combined are not enough for the Heart of Time to kill!

While they were confused, Douglas’ voice suddenly became loud and echoed throughout the hall, “There are certain things that we need to figure out.

“What is the nature of magic?

“Why do creatures have spiritual power?

“What is the nature of spiritual power?

“In what form does it exist?”

Huh?

Even Fernando looked at Douglas in shock with his mouth half open. What questions were these?

The ancient sorcerers had always been considering the nature of magic, so the experts like Congus were not surprised. However, wasn't a spiritual power born naturally? Wasn't it a unique feature of the soul? What were those questions about?

They found it absurd and ridiculous when they just heard the questions. If it were a middle-rank or a low-rank sorcerer who asked the question, they would've interrupted the guy rudely, but the speaker now was an archmage who was capable of "Time Stop". Since the legends were all hiding, that was the strongest power!

So, they listened patiently. Gradually, they discovered in shock that it was impossible for them to answer those questions! Also, after considering carefully, they realized that it seemed really necessary to work on those questions!

The middle-rank and senior-rank sorcerers down below, including Erica, looked at each other in amusement. If they could answer those fundamental questions, they would have become legendary sorcerers a long time ago. Would they need Douglas' reminder at all?

However, the series of questions did slightly shock them. They subconsciously sat straight and stared at Douglas attentively. After all, as an archmage, he might not be a big deal in Antiffler, but he was definitely one of the strongest persons here.

Frowning, Fernando considered the answers to those questions, only to discover that he did not have the slightest clue. He then realized that Douglas unleashed an indescribable vibe. He was no longer as warm as usual but much more intimidating and solemn!

In an even louder voice, Douglas continued his speech magnificently, “Are earth, fire, wind, and water really the most basic elements in the world? If they are, how do they stick together to form everything we know? And if not, what are the real magic elements?”

“What is the nature of the soul?”

“Is the soul different from consciousness? If so, in what form does consciousness exist?”

“Do we need any ‘tools’ to illustrate and build magic models?”

“Does God exist? If God exists, what is His nature and form of existence? In what form does Alterna, the ancestor of vampires, exist? Why can they remain undead?”

“Why do the sun and the moon exist in this world? Why do they rise and set every day? What power motivates them in their operations? Those phenomena seem natural in the material world, but if we ask more whys, we will realize that we haven’t figured out the reasons behind them yet. Are those reasons, laws, and knowledge concerned with magic? Can we combine them with magic and help us explore the nature of the magic world?”

As he raised his questions, both the experts on the stage and the sorcerers down below changed their faces, switching from disdain and amusement to concentrated consideration. The questions about the rise and setting of the sun and moon hit them like lightning. They trembled and did not know how to express their feelings.

Yes. Why are they like that?

Why have I never considered those questions before?

What secrets do those phenomena, which seem to be the unquestionable law and nature of this world, contain?

Fernando clenched his fists; his red pupils full of excitement. He looked at Douglas' shadow and never felt that the guy was taller!

Similar questions had occurred in the studies of every sorcerer now and then, but having been used to such phenomena, they never considered those questions as something worth paying attention to, and they never asked the questions so deeply. At this moment, when they listened to Douglas' enlightening speech, they all felt that the mist before their eyes was driven away by sunlight. So, our studies on magic and this world are still so shallow! There are still so many whys that need addressing!

They felt that a new gate had been opened before him, vaguely revealing what appeared to be a new field of magic. More and more people were shivering in contemplation. Even Owen, who had been angry about Douglas earlier, no longer found the guy nefarious anymore. He felt that the guy's whys were extremely charming!

More and more questions popped up in his head. What is lightning? Why can't metal stop it when wood can? Why is mankind divided into different genders? Why can't human beings float in the sky instead of being stuck to the ground?

Erica covered her mouth, believing that Mr. Douglas had surpassed Mr. Fernando and become the greatest hero in her mind! So, the magic research beyond battles could also be so attractive and astounding!

“What is up? What is down? Why is the sky? What is the earth...” Fernando murmured, full of doubts about the things that he thought he had understood perfectly.

Holding his forehead, Douglas slightly bowed. “As long as we can figure out those questions, I believe that magic will develop much faster. The mysteries that we figure out will work on us and fortify us. Perhaps our development will be no slower than the Church’s!”

After he backed off, the hall was still in utter silence. It was not until one minute later that the warmest welcome that never appeared even when the leaders of the magic organizations spoke burst out!

Douglas could see clearly that the sorcerers down below were excited, if not demented. The ubiquitous despair and depression just now were dissolved. He could only sigh about that. It was the first time he had introduced his opinions publicly and systematically and raised the questions that he had considered for a long time. Back when he was in Antiffler, even his teacher and his classmates were unwilling to pay attention to his thoughts in that aspect, much less other people.

It seems not bad... As a regular human being, Douglas felt delighted.

Owen, Erica, and the other sorcerers started to feel that the darkness around them was fading. They were desperate earlier because they thought that magic had been developed to the maximum but still could not compare to the divine power and the Church. They were hopeless because they could not see the light. Now, Mr. Douglas’ questions had opened a boundless world. The development of magic had just begun and was far away from the limits! The future was not entirely hopeless!

Arnold and the rest of them had placed their hope on the Silver Moon, the vampires, the dragons, and the other exterior forces, which more or less boosted the morale, but it was not nearly as inspiring as giving the future to themselves.

However, was it really possible to answer those questions?

After the excitement, worries and suspicions surged in the hearts of the sorcerers, as could be seen from their faces. Douglas was not surprised at them. He never thought that everybody could be gathered after a speech. That would have been a fantasy!

The meeting ended in such an atmosphere. Amanata, Congus, Nielson, Priscilla, and the other archmages looked at Douglas in a slightly different way now.

Douglas rose with a smile and said to Arnold, “Mr. President, I would like to take part in the mission to assassinate Alfonsol. After that, I hope that I can spend some time in Allyn.”